



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy will honor 76 graduates

The 12th graduating class of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy will receive commencement certificates at a noon ceremony Saturday, June 12, at Appleton East High School.

John G. Hathaway, deputy assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, will address the 76 graduates, as well as parents, relatives, mentors, and friends on hand to celebrate their success. The cadets come from 25 counties throughout the state.

The goal of the academy is to re-shape the lives of 16-to-18-year-olds who are at risk for problems as they enter adulthood. The program uses a structured, military-style environment to build cadets' self-confidence, leadership skills, and personal discipline.

A typical Challenge Academy day begins at 5:20 a.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m., with classroom work, community service, physical fitness and team activities. Cadets spend about four hours each day in classes to learn basic math, reading and writing skills. Classes are taught by state-certified teachers.

The Academy curriculum also includes a career skills and exploration program, health and drug abuse awareness, leadership, discipline and physical fitness.

Upon graduating from the 22-week course, each cadet is paired with a mentor in the cadet's hometown. The mentor meets regularly with the cadet to offer guidance and encouragement, and to keep the cadet's new life on track.

Twenty-five states offer similar programs nationwide. More than 46,000 teens have successfully completed National Guard youth programs since 1993. More than 90 percent of cadets who finish the program receive their high school equivalency diploma (HSED), and more than 80 percent stay out of trouble with the law.

The Challenge Academy will begin its next 22-week class July 22, 2004. That class will graduate on Dec. 18, 2004. Applications are available for future classes by contacting the Challenge Academy at (608) 269-4605.

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NOTE: News media organizations are welcome to cover this event. The graduation ceremony begins at 12:00 noon at the Appleton East High School gym, 2121 E. Emmers Dr., Appleton. A drill team will perform at 11:15 a.m. Graduates come from 25 Wisconsin counties:

Brown	4	Juneau	4	Oconto	1	Washington	2
Burnett	1	Lafayette	1	Pierce	1	Waukesha	4
Chippewa	4	Lincoln	2	Portage	1	Waushara	1
Columbia	1	Marinette	3	Racine	3	Winnebago	1
Crawford	2	Marquette	1	Rock	6		
Dane	5	Milwaukee	15	Vernon	5		
Jefferson	2	Monroe	2	Walworth	4		

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